

PEACHAM'S GREAT DAY.

(Continued from 2d Page.)

shall review the record, may it prove that the beneficent influence of both church and school had, to day, but just begun.

Century past! we thank thee for this hour, For all thy gifts of blessing and of power, Century to come! we hail thy grand advance; Presaging good, God's interests to enhance, May church and school, together, heart and hand, Another century for manhood stand. Recall the record of a hundred years; So may our children, grateful for the past, Rehearse, like us, the glories that shall last. Go on, O church! go on, O school! we pray, Till error, vice and wrong have passed away.

The choir then sang "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem," after which came the historical address by Rev. M. M. Martin, D. D. of Allegan, Mich.

The Historical Address. The speaker took as a basis for his remarks the word of God to Abraham, "I will bless thee and thou shalt be a blessing." When a nation forgets to celebrate its birthday, he said, it is evidence of the "dawn of a crisis prophetic of decline." His aim on this occasion was to hold up the history of this church as the significance of a hundred years of church life in a mountain town like this. To rightly measure the work of a church we must look at it from a distance.

The history of the church is essentially the history of the town. It was the town that took the initiative in having preaching. Before 1791 we find several records of the town voting money for preaching; and appointing the selectmen as a committee of supply; and even treating with a Rev. Mr. Chapin on the subject of settling in the town, in the work of the ministry, with provision for moving expenses, the offer of a farm and a stipulated salary. If the record is reliable, eighty others failed to make a permanent connection with this church. Eighty candidates! This surpasses some of our modern experiences.

This church was formally organized April 14, 1794. But its spirit may be traced to such men as Huss, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Robert Brown, and John Robinson, and to such places as Prague, Erfurt, Worms, Scrooby, Amsterdam, Leyden, Old Plymouth, New Plymouth. Seemingly it was an unimportant event for a little church of a dozen members to be organized in a little town on the mountains. And yet in God's mind it was very important indeed. For out of it was to come an influence which was to usher in the kingdom of God. It was to be, literally, "A city on a hill which could not be hid."

The speaker devoted a great deal of time to reviewing American history as bearing upon the establishment of educational institutions and the development of the educational idea. He also dwelt at some length on the environments of this little church of twelve members organized in 1794—the peculiar state of the country at that time, the important process of reconstruction of our nationality following the revolutionary period. This church, he said, was born at the beginning of the most remarkable of all the centuries.

Vermont has had her full share in establishing churches and schools and Christian colleges all over our great West. But in 1794 when this church was organized, this work had not been done. You have been honored in having a share in this glorious work. And you commenced where Nehemiah's church did, "over against your own house." But you did not stop there.

The records are very meagre of what was done between 1776 when Jonathan Elkins came here, and 1794, when this church was organized; and also between 1794 and 1799, when the first pastor was installed. The same is true of the time between 1799 and 1806 when the church edifice was built on the top of the hill yonder. We can only read between the lines.

The unwritten story of the struggles, the aspirations, the heroic self-sacrifice and the determined purpose of the pioneers of this church is eloquence itself. As we have so meagre a record, let us read between the lines some of the experiences out of which this church was born. It is not easy for us today as we look over these sunlit hills and vales, with their drapery of green, with beautiful homes, with all things that belong to a highly cultivated farming community—it is not easy, I say, for the mind filled with this fair prospect to perfectly apprehend its primeval condition and appearance.

It was a "howling wilderness" indeed, for the few stamp-covered openings, with rude primitive dwellings in the center of each, did not intimidate the wild animals that had within a short time held full sway over the dense forest, save as occasional companies of red men traversed their jungles, or encamped for a brief space on the banks of yonder lake for the purpose of hunting or fishing.

The act of organic legislation was one of no small significance in the history of this town and state and county. It had in it the fruit of a wonderful future.

It is with a feeling of deep pathos that one reads the record of that first act of legislation, and those that follow. The closing words of that solemn covenant into which they entered, showing their deep sense of sin, and their strong reliance on God, remind of something which seems to have gone out of date.

"In reliance on the fear of God, we do now in his presence and in the presence of each other, subscribe with our hands unto the Lord, as a solemn token, that

we this day taken the vows of God upon us."

These are the names: James Bailey, Jonathan Elkins, James Bailey, Jr., Ephraim Foster, Reuben Minor, William Varnum, James Abbott, Mary Bailey, Mary Bailey, 2d, Mary Walker, Phebe Skeel, Anna Bailey.

Peacham, Vt., April 14, 1794, JAMES BAILEY, Church Clerk.

And six days later we find this record:

The church this day renewed their covenant and received in addition Mrs. Hannah Foster, Mrs. Sarah Varnum, Mrs. Mehitable Abbott, Mrs. Dolly Varnum.

Peacham, Vt., April 20, 1794, JAMES BAILEY, Church Clerk.

The records of this church for the first sixty-five years, which I have examined, show that they were not only godly men which composed it, but clear-headed business men.

We cannot fail to be impressed, however, in reading these records that there was a good deal of human nature in those men of a century ago, after all. But a great effort was made on the part of the church to make that nature divine as far as discipline could accomplish the result, not, of course, to make their members less like man, but only more like God, by turning the energies into their true channels.

These records incidentally show the close association of religious with civil and even military affairs. The selectmen were a committee of supply. And proof of the intimate connection of our early church fathers with military matters is spread all over the old society records, by great punctiliousness in according to persons their military titles. "Gen." "Col." "Capt." "Lieut." appear constantly in the entries, and point to the importance of military drills and reviews. In early times these reviews were made religious by being opened with prayer and psalm singing.

The influence of this town and church and Academy then, is to be measured by the men who have lived and died here, and those who have been nurtured here, but whose lot has been cast in other places. And when I say men I mean women—also—not "women of both sexes"—as Mr. Beecher once characterized a certain company—but women in the best sense.

The men talked of the points of the sermon, of the doctrines of predestination, anti-pedo-baptism and pedobaptism, of original sin and that most charming mystery—the unpardonable sin; and then in lower voices, of wolf and bear killing, of the town meeting, the taxes, the crops and cattle, and they examined with keen interest one another's horses and many a sly bargain in horseflesh or exchange of cows and pigs was suggested under the sheltering horse sheds. Many a piece of village electioneering was also discussed and "worked" between the services. The women discoursed in low voices of their spinning and weaving, of their candle-dipping or candle-running, of their success or failure in the yearly trial of patience and skill—their soap making, of their patterns in quilt piecing, and sometimes they slyly exchanged quilt patterns.

The speaker used some time in paying deserved tribute to the sons and daughters of the church and Academy who had made their influence felt throughout the country, referring to Mr. Worcester as a true gentleman, an earnest Christian and a general, and making special mention of his work as a preacher and the value of his life to the cause of collegiate and Christian education.

Then followed page after page of reference to the work of the pastors who succeeded Mr. Worcester, the full text of which we cannot find space for. In closing he drew an interesting picture of what could be seen if all the active forces of this church could be marshalled and made to pass in review—the little band of twelve who organized the church; the three men of God, Worcester, Merrill and Boutelle; the six faithful pastors who followed them; the officers of the church; the 1200 persons who have been members; the long line of Sabbath school superintendents and teachers at the head of thousands of children; those men who have held the important and delicate position of leaders in song; the pioneers in slavery and temperance reform, the long line of young people organized in active societies; and the godly men and women who have been teachers in the academy and have gone out to do similar work elsewhere.

This church which is just crossing the threshold of its second century has a record which many churches might envy—a rich inheritance. But it must not be forgotten that an inheritance from the past is a debt to the future. Debts should always be paid.

After an anthem by the choir the audience sung the following hymn, composed by Miss Florilla F. Clark of Peacham:

With mingled sorrow, hope and joy, From quickened hearts we raise To Thee, O God, for our lov'd church, This hymn of grateful praise.

We bless Thee for her loyal souls Whose memories bid us live To love and cherish sacredly The best the past can give.

We crave thy help as ne'er before; Our spirits thirst for Thee; O Thou who hearest our fathers' prayers, Our loving leader be.

Renew in us their faith and hope; Make courage banish fear; Let fruits of joy and peace abound And every grace sincere.

Thus may our church fulfil her trust To childhood, age and youth By arming each with Lord's bright shield, God's many-sided truth.

O come throughout life's thoughtful day Fair morn and darkest night, O Love eternal, full and free, Thyself the Truth, the Light.

The exercises of the morning closed with the benediction, pronounced by Rev. J. Boardman of Barnet.

The Afternoon Speeches.

The afternoon exercises opened with an anthem followed by reminiscences of father Worcester by his son Rev. Dr. J. H. Worcester. Mrs. Fred Stoddard then sang a solo, the music being composed by I. G. Blake of Worcester, Mass., a native of Peacham.

Principal Bunker presided at the afternoon exercises and there were two hours of speechmaking from former residents and invited guests. The first speaker was Rev. J. Boardman of Barnet, who responded to the toast, "As the Lord leads me." He said one could see the drift of the day from these high mountains. Peacham has had its share of great men. He praised Congressman Wilson for standing up for what he thought was right, though the speaker said he did not believe in the Wilson bill. The church is standing up for what is right and the influence of the churches in the hill towns of Vermont is far-reaching.

H. P. Moulton of Washington, D. C., responded to the toast "Our Lawyers." He is a native of Concord and made the most eloquent speech of the day. "If I am asked where I may find the handsomest young woman, I should reply 'Go to Peacham.' Where may I find an academy to educate my children, 'Go to Peacham?' Where can I find the beginning of theological thought, 'Go to Peacham!' Where can I find a bright lawyer, 'Go to Peacham' and get another Thad Stevens." The brightest, purest and noblest in Vermont, if not a Peacham boy, was Matthew Carpenter, and Senator Edmunds is the peer of any man, the grandest of the grand and the noblest of the noble." In closing Mr. Moulton made a strong plea for temperance, pointing with pride to the record in that line of work that the Peacham church had made.

Leonard Martin of Canada was introduced to respond to the toast, "The old meeting house on the hill." Mr. Martin is 93 years old and was present when the meeting house was raised in 1806. As he was only four years old then, his reminiscences were very interesting to those that could hear the venerable speaker.

Arthur F. Stone of the St. Johnsbury CALEDONIAN responded to the toast, "Influence of the Press." He spoke of the fact that the newspapers of the land followed all the religious movements, that the metropolitan dailies always had extracts from the sermons in their Monday papers, and that Dr. Talmage's sermons appeared every week in hundreds of papers and were read by thousands of readers. He said that the account of this day's exercises would appear the next morning in all the New England dailies, as the newspaper's function was to publish the news of this notable occasion.

Mrs. C. A. Bunker then gave the following clever poem:

Is Peacham Dead?
Peacham dead? Why, so they say,
Could't hold on like the one horse shay,
But dragged along 'mid hopes and fears
Something over one hundred years.

Used to be something long ago,
Once in vigorous health, you know,
After a fever and a cough,
Old age set in and took her off.

She was handsome when young, they say,
But there! beauty's only a day,
They've dug the grave to put her in,
A narrow one, for she was thin.

As a rail before she died,
And all the doctors ailed and cried:
Heart failure made this patient go,
Medical skill could not avail, you know.

And so the cry has gone around,
And some would put her under ground,
But, like the ship, she seems to feel
A "thrill of life along her keel."

And if you watch her, you will find
That blood, good blood, of healthy kind,
Is flowing round from head to heel,
And she can see and think and feel.

And like a plant, so often found,
Whose roots are buried in the ground,
Shows every year of growth a scar,
She here is left, her sons afar.

Peacham's not dead. Her pastures green,
As fair as any ever seen,
Are not things only fit for sheep,
But herds of cattle fat and sleek.

She is not dead, but, quiet dame,
Is still alive and minds "the game,"
Tho' winds may blow and breakers roar,
Tho' storms arise and clouds downpour.

Tho' strikers all the railways tear,
And miners let the grates go bare,
Tho' "scabs" are marked and unions rule,
She rarely ever plays the fool.

Her sons are strong, her daughters pure,
Her hills are high, but they'll endure
As long as sun its course shall run,
Or mortals try to earn "well done."

Why, bless your heart, she is not dead!
But hale and hearty and well fed,
Don't you see it in her cooking,
Don't you see how well she's looking?

Rev. M. S. Dudley of Nantucket, Mass., was introduced as a former pastor and very cordially greeted. He was pastor of the church from December, 1870, until August, 1873. His opening remarks were addressed to the committee of arrangements and he urged them most strongly to have all the exercises and addresses published. "The ocean greets the mountains and many times down by the sea I have defended the mountains. The mountains are always there, always trustworthy, but the sea is treacherous and a devourer of life." In closing Mr. Dudley offered to give \$50 towards Peacham library.

Rev. D. O. Allen of Lynn, Mass., was introduced as the husband of a Peacham girl. He began by saying that he had always supposed he had married the Peacham girl. "This is the most notable day in the history of the church and history of Peacham. The influence of the church and school has been dwelt on, but I tell you the influence of the Peacham mother is above them all."

Mrs. Moses Martin was introduced as a lady who had married a Peacham boy. She said she had a most difficult task to speak on such a subject, and after several

pleasantries brought her greetings to those who belonged to this famous centenary church.

Dr. C. W. Cowles of D. Rhy Line told about the man who was on trial for a crime and upon being asked by the court what he would do if he should be released, replied, "Gosh, I'd streak it for Peacham." He said that everybody that could had come here today, and he congratulated the audience on the success of the centennial.

Rev. Mr. Wathen of Lisbon, N. H., spoke very forcefully upon the influence of the Peacham church, and Rev. D. McKindley of West Barnet responded to the toast, "Our Scotch Neighbors." Rev. P. B. Fisk of Lyndon explained that the hymn by the Fisk family would have to be omitted as two members of the family were absent. He then related a humorous story about Father Worcester.

After These Hundred Years.

[The following poem was written by a Peacham young lady, for the occasion.]

After these hundred years
Of noble, yet ignoble life,
Of struggle and failure and tears,
Of love yet imperfect, and strife.

Must the thing that has been in the past,
Be forever the thing that shall be?
Or do we enter, at last,
On a different life, strong and free?

Stronger, for every success
That our fathers and mothers have won,
Safely for every defeat
They have suffered and taught us to shun.

Freer for every bond
That their growth has unconsciously burst,
Sweeter for every thorn
They have plucked from the land that is cursed.

Thankful for every wrong
That has been repented and righted,
Mindful lest aught should divide
Us, whom our God has united.

God of our fathers, thou knowest
The bitterness, anger, and wrath,
The evil-speaking, and clamor,
And malice, we sow in our path.

Help us, our God, to uproot them;
Grant that these fruits may increase—
Gentleness, temperance, meekness,
Longsuffering, love, joy and peace.

Grant unto us fuller measure
Of the spirit which is in thy Son;
Work out in us thy good pleasure;
Speak unto us thy "well done."

This closed the speechmaking and letters of regret were read from Rev. A. W. Wild of Elizabethtown, N. Y., pastor of the church from 1874 through 1881, Col. Franklin Fairbanks of St. Johnsbury, E. C. Sprague of Buffalo, N. Y., who enclosed a handsome check in his letter, and E. E. Strong.

Rev. Mr. Williams then announced that more letters and addresses would be given in the evening and the exercises of the afternoon were closed.

The Evening Reception.

A large company gathered in Academy Hall in the evening for a social time. Eugene Cowles of the "Bostonians" favored the company with a fine rendering of "Out on the Deep," and "Annie Laurie" as an encore. Benjamin Marsh of Louisville addressed the audience and in closing presented the "Juvenile Library Association" with a generous check. Letters were then read from absent members and at a late hour the company dispersed.

Notes of the Day.

The church was beautifully decorated for the occasion, the decorations having been contributed by a friend of the church in New York. On one side of the pulpit was an oil painting of Father Worcester and on the other a painting of Rev. David Merrill, the second pastor of the church. Two banners hung near the paintings. On one was inscribed the words, "God's blessing has for 100 years followed this church," and the other read "Let young and old in this our jubilee year rejoice and be glad." In the rear of the church were two interesting relics. They were the try square and plane used by Edward Clark in building the old meeting house. Mr. Clark was the master workman of the meeting house and on the square were his initials and the date of 1793.

Mention was made in the historical address of the famous ox sermon. This sermon became immensely famous, was translated into five languages and when a million copies had been printed it was the most widely circulated book in the world next to the Bible.

The dinner was one of the best that was ever served in the vestry of the church and was most heartily enjoyed by all.

Among those present from a distance were H. O. Flint and wife of Salem, Mass., J. D. Flint and wife of Fall River, Mass., Chauncey S. Walker of Richmond, John G. Brown and wife of Utica, N. Y., John C. Cameron of Salt Lake City, B. K. Marsh of Louisville, Ky., Mrs. C. G. Warner and Miss Warner of St. Louis, E. T. Bingham of Washington and many others.

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